



## PACIFIC ISLAND POWER UTILITIES: THE WORKFORCE CHALLENGE

- ❑ Pacific Power Association (PPA) is an association for the development of the power industry in the Pacific Island Countries
- ❑ PPA currently has a membership of 25 electricity utilities operating in 22 Pacific Island Countries
- ❑ Utilities across the Pacific face two main challenges: aging infrastructure, and an **aging workforce**.
- ❑ Managers often struggle to fill positions with qualified staff.
- ❑ **Women are an untapped labor pool**



## GENDER AND PACIFIC POWER: THE DATA



Workforce male/female role	Regional average
Total Staff (male)	78.7%
Total Staff (female)	21.3%
Technical Staff (male)	96%
Technical Staff (female)	4%
Non-Technical Staff (male)	69.4%
Non-Technical Staff (female)	30.6%



The data shows that women are represented throughout the workforce, but particularly in technical and managerial roles – the areas in which power utilities struggle the most in recruiting qualified staff to fill positions <sup>3</sup>

## GENDER AND PACIFIC POWER: INITIAL RESPONSE

- ❑ A gender assessment was completed in 2017, and a Gender Action Plan developed to increase the % of women in technical and managerial roles
- ❑ This research pointed towards the need throughout the sector – from management to trainees – **for a better understanding of why gender is relevant in the workplace, and what practical approaches could be taken to increase opportunities for women**
- ❑ PPA therefore launched a Gender Portal in 2018 with the goal to provide resources to encourage PPA's member utilities to increase their employment of women
- ❑ PPA also selected and appointed Gender Champions – 2 men and 2 women from utilities across the region - who exemplify leadership on gender issues
- ❑ Gender champions introduced the initiative to CEOs at the PPA annual conference, and conducted a survey of 52 delegates (40 men, 12 women) <sup>4</sup>



## HIGHLIGHTED RESULTS FROM THE GENDER SURVEY

- ❑ Word of mouth is the no. 1 favored hiring channel for technical and managerial jobs – leading to more hiring of men
- ❑ Cultural constraints /stereotypes and lack of knowledge about jobs are the key barriers for women
- ❑ Mentoring is hugely important for career progression, with male mentors particularly important for women to advance
- ❑ Men broadly appear to support more women in the sector, though don't perceive discrimination or disadvantage for women, while women do



## DIRECTIONS FOR WORK GOING FORWARD

- ❑ *Building a data-driven business case for gender equality, gender equity, and workforce development in the Pacific power sector.*
  - ❑ There is a need for data on how human resource systems work in most Pacific Island utilities makes it challenging to optimize management practices and attract and retain the best talent.
- ❑ *Future talent training program and outreach communications campaign with educational institutions and the general public, to strengthen the funnel of qualified candidates.*
  - ❑ There is a need to prepare young women to kick-start careers in the sector by acquiring some of the technical vocational skills that will make them more employable



## DIRECTIONS FOR WORK GOING FORWARD (CONT.)

- ❑ *Human resource policy development and capacity building, to improve the workplace experience and career progression of both women and men*
  - ❑ There is a need to focus on increasing the capacity of human resource professionals in the power utilities to create the institutional structures (policies, practices and procedures) for human resource management.
- ❑ *Training and awareness raising within the existing utility workforce, to build key leadership skills and strengthen support for gender equality measures*
  - ❑ There is a need to focus on building leadership skills and peer support networks and leveraging the commitment and expertise of the gender champions to build community within the workforce around the goals of this program

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## AMERICAN SAMOA STEM PARTNERSHIP





## JUNIOR SOLAR SPRINT PILOT



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